responsive to the changing environment. Primarily, it is the Secretary and the Head of the Department who is responsible for checking corruption in his Ministry/Department. The Central Vigilance Commission, the Central Bureau of Investigation and internal vigilance set-ups in the Ministries/Departments are the agencies, apart from the Administrative Vigilance Division in the Ministry of Personnel, Public Grievances & Pensions, which are involved in this task.

The Administrative Vigilance Division

of the Department of Personnel & Training coordinates the efforts of the Ministries/Departments in the field of vigilance and anti-corruption measures, besides, rendering necessary guidance and assistance, wherever, needed. The Annual Action Plan prepared by the Ministry of Personnel, Public Grievances & Pensions, which is implemented by the Ministries/ Departments envisages a three-pronged strategy for containment of corruption in public life through prevention, surveillance and detection and punitive deterrent action. It was initially launched in 1985-86 and is being continued on an annual basis.

With a view to eradicting corruption from public life, the Prevention of Corruption Act was originally enacted in 1947. This Act has further been strengthened by the re-enactment of the Prevention of Corruption Act, 1988, which is more comprehensive. The new Act of 1988 provides for:—

1. Widening the scope of definition of the term "Public Servant" including therein the office bearers of registered Cooperative Societies engaged in Agriculture, Industry, Trade or Banking etc.
2. Incorporation of provisions for setting up Sepcial Courts try offences under this Act.
3. Incorporation of offences under Section 161 to 165-A of the IPC and,
4. Incorporation of definition of the term "Known sources of income" (to mean only lawful sources of income).

The preventive measures duly supported by various conduct Rules governing the service conditions of public servants act as deterrent against corruption.

4. In order to look into the allegations of corruption against high public functionaries a Lok Pal Bill has been introduced in the Parliament on the 13th September, 1996. The Report of the Parliamentary Standing Committee on Home Affairs on this Bill has been received. After consideration of this Report and decisions in respect of the same, Government propose to have this Bill taken up for consideration and passing during the current Session.

Number of Ministries

256. SHRI PARMESHWAR KUMAR AGARWALLA: Will the PRIME MINISTER be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that during sixties and early seventies there were limited number of Ministries, for example, for Agricultural sector there was one Ministry of Food and Agriculture and for Industrial Sector one Ministry of Industry and Commerce;

(b) if so, what is the justification for the present large number of Ministries, such as, for agriculture sector five to six Ministries of Food, Agriculture, Civil Supplies, Water Resources, Rural Areas and Employment and similarly for the Industry and other sectors; and

(c) what administrative economics have been planned and achieved during the last five years of liberalised/deregulated regime?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF PERSONNEL, PUBLIC GRIEVANCES AND PENSIONS AND THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF PARLIAMENTARY AFFAIRS (SHRI S.R. BALASUBRAMONIYAN): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) Presently, there are 35 Ministries. In this connection, it may be noted that Ministries/Departments of the Government of India are created under the Government of India (Allocated of Business) Rules, 1961 for the convenient transaction of business of the Government. Depending on the changes in the nature of the Government's business, policies, procedures and priorities, the Ministries/Departments are restructured/abolished/created from time to time. This is an ongoing process and takes into account the changing needs of the Government.

(c) The Ministry of Finance has been monitoring economy exercises on 10% cut in posts initiated in early 1992 based on a decision announced by the then Prime Minister in the National Development Council in December, 1991. According to the information available, so far, about 1.42 lakh posts have been abolished in various Ministries/Departments. The posts so abolished also pertain to phasing out of certain activities due to de-regulation/liberalisation especially in the Department of Industrial Development, Department of Commerce, Department of Supply, etc. The exercise is still continuing.

Special cell to accord sanction for prosecution

257. SHRI AMAR SINGH: Will the PRIME MINISTER be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government have since set up a special cell to accord sanction in corruption cases referred to it by C.B.I. and if so, the details thereof and the time stipulated for according sanction in those cases;

(b) what is the number of cases wherein sanctions for prosecution have been accorded since the inception of the special cell; and

(c) what are the details of cases which are still pending with the cell and the reasons in each case for not granting sanction?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF PERSONNEL, PUBLIC GRIEVANCES AND PENSIONS AND THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF PARLIAMENTARY AFFAIRS (SHRI S.R. BALASUBRAMONIYAN): (a) No, Sir. The Government has not set up any special cell to accord sanction in corruption cases. However, in accordance with the latest policy guidelines in respect of cases relating to sanction for prosecution under the Criminal Procedure Code, 1973 and the Prevention of Corruption Act, 1988, a time limit of 3 (three) months has been prescribed for taking a view by the Ministries/Departments etc.

(b) and (c) Do not arise, in view of (a) above.

Accord of sanction for prosecution

258. SHRI SHIV CHARAN SINGH: SHRI PARAG CHALIHA:

(a) whether it is a fact that Government are very quick in according sanctions for prosecution of Group B, C and D civilian officers while they sit over the requests of prosecuting agencies to proceed against IAS officers; and

(b) if not, what are the details of IAS and non-IAS officers against whom such sanctions had been sought during 1996-97 till date by different agencies after preliminary/specific probes?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF PERSONNEL, PUBLIC GRIEVANCES AND PENSIONS AND THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF PARLIAMENTARY AFFAIRS (SHRI S.R. BALASUBRAMONIYAN): (a) and (b) It is incorrect to say that sanctions for prosecution of Group B, C and D civilian officers are issued quickly and that similar cases against IAS officers are delayed. In terms of para 3.1 of Chapter I of Vigilance Manual, Vol. I, the primiary responsibility for the maintenance of purity, integrity and efficiency in the organisations vests in the Secretary of the administrative Ministry or the head of the Department.